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Use of Illustrative Material in the Promotion of Boys' and Girls' 4-H Club Work

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USE OF ILLUSTRATIVE MATERIAL IN THE PROMOTION OF BOYS' AND GIRLS' 4-H CLUB WORK

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Methods of Extension Teaching Compared

Extension workers agree that the demonstration is one of the best methods of teaching others a good practice. Unfortunately not many persons can be reached in this way. It is impossible for all persons in a county to see all the demonstrations that it is desired to have them see. A little study will show also that it is not always practical to make full use of some demonstrations, such as interior decoration and beautification of the home grounds. In both it is desirable to show the "before" as well as the "after," but this can not be done in an afternoon meeting. It must not be forgotten that people are different; what appeals to one may not appeal to another. You recall that in school some of the class who did well in arithmetic could not succeed in grammar. Minds are different. Persons learn in different ways. Some find it easiest to learn by hearing some one tell it; others prefer to read about it, but most persons learn by seeing the thing, or still better by seeing and hearing about it at the same time. There are persons who will not accept and do the new thing the first time they see or hear about it. They have to be jolted several times and in several ways before they will act. One must make use of several means and methods in teaching others the better things of life.

Whenever it is possible to show the thing itself that we wish to talk about, it should be used, but too frequently we can not do this. When it is not possible or convenient to get the thing itself to show at a meeting one usually uses the easiest way out of the difficulty -- one talks about it. In many cases talking is the poorest method of presenting a subject. Talking is all right provided the subject is simple and can be explained in a clear and easily understood way. On the other hand, if the audience or the reader has never seen the thing or practice one wishes to tell about, then the chances of success in teaching people will be greatly increased by the use of illustrations such as photographs, motion pictures, charts, and posters.

Why Use Illustrations?

Why are pictures and other types of illustrations used? They are a kind of mental crutch to help us over difficulties in discussing a subject. All peoples have made use of drawing in expressing themselves. A long time ago a wise Chinaman said, "A picture tells more than a thousand words." Suppose on returning home some one should ask, "What kind of a looking group of boys and girls attended the camp in Washington?" If you had to depend upon speech alone how could you give an idea of what this group looks like? A photograph will tell quickly and accurately that the Washington camp was attended by a fine-looking group of boys and girls.

Ways in Which Photographs May Be Used

Let us consider some of the different ways in which one can make effective use of photographs in extending one's usefulness as a club worker. After returning home one would wish to tell the people about the trip to Washington and thus encourage other boys and girls to strive to achieve a similar experience. How could this be done better than to use pictures or lantern slides? Is there any other very satisfactory way to tell about the numerous things seen in Washington?

The moment one tries to explain how to make some implement or home convenience it is quickly realized how helpful a good picture or drawing is. A good series of pictures showing the important steps in a demonstration can be used to advantage in presenting the subject to those who did not attend the demonstration.

Imagine trying to carry on a room-improvement campaign without pictures of what others have done along that line. The results will be slower without pictures and undoubtedly not so satisfactory as with them. The extension worker who has a set of good pictures of successful and practical room-improvement work in the county will be able to spend less time arguing about the desirability of making improvements and can give more time in presenting practical and helpful suggestions on how best to make the improvements. Furthermore the persons making the improvements are much more likely to get what is wanted and be satisfied if they can make their decision after seeing a collection of pictures of other rooms changed successfully in the county. It may be worth noting that when Mrs. Brown finds out how her neighbor, Mrs. Jones, has improved her rooms, it often happens that she quickly decides to outdo Mrs. Jones.

Very few persons have the ability to describe colored objects accurately. For this reason good colored lantern slides are valuable in giving talks on subjects involving an understanding of color. Imagine how helpful colored slides would be in discussing fancy packs, or in a study of birds. Nearly every one recognizes the beautiful when it is seen and likes it without knowing why. Good colored lantern slides properly used can accomplish a great deal in home improvement. An equally good opportunity is in discussing beautification of home grounds. These are only a few of the numerous instances in which effective use can be made of colored lantern slides and other illustrations in club work.

In the judging of livestock it will be rare that animals of just the desired type can be found locally for illustrative purposes. Therefore in such work and especially for training judging teams good illustrations will be found of great value in bringing out certain points of importance.

There is another use of photographs. Some people are not inclined to believe what others tell them about things which they themselves have not seen or done. They will not believe it when told that a certain farmer whom they know in the adjoining township got a big increase in his cotton crop on land where he turned under cowpeas, but if these doubting Thomases be shown a photograph of the demonstration they will either believe it or go to see for themselves.

Photographs for Publication

Meetings alone can not be depended upon to put across club programs. Experience has shown that the press is a helpful and essential agent in promoting club work. Good sharp pictures that tell clearly and in an interesting way what is to be told always make an article more acceptable to the publisher and more interesting and helpful to the reader. Ability to write good articles for publication is highly desirable and well worth striving to acquire. Club work is very much in need of members and leaders who can do this. But do not forget that the most widely read papers and magazines are all profusely illustrated.

Photographs always lose in quality in the printing process; therefore, the engraver should be given prints of the very best quality. Photographs to illustrate articles should be clear, sharp, and full of detail. For best results the photograph should be somewhat larger than the printed cut and should preferably be made on glossy paper. Usually the larger the photograph sent to the engraver the better the printed picture will be. Those who wish a hand camera for this purpose will find the $3\frac{1}{4}$ by $4\frac{1}{4}$ a good size. Most engravers prefer that the photographs be unmounted and mailed flat with the manuscript. The photographs should be protected by cardboard packing on both sides. Never roll or bend photographs. All writing upon the back of the prints should be done very lightly so as not to injure the glossy surface of the paper. If the prints are sent by parcel post only a brief legend sufficient for identification should be written on the back of each print. The letter containing complete information regarding the photographs may be attached to the outside of the package of the prints.

Posters

Interest in certain club events may be increased by advertising. For this purpose posters can be used to advantage. The results obtained by their use will depend, of course, upon how well the posters are planned and designed. When planning posters remember first of all that they are intended for the passer-by. One need not stop to read a good poster but can see and understand it while passing by. Generally it is a waste of money and time to use posters having much printed matter on them because people seldom read them. The poster first must catch the eye and then must hold the gaze and invite the reading of its message. Therefore the first essential of a poster is an idea or message. The second essential is a design so attractive that the person who passes by will see the poster, read it, remember it, and act on its suggestion.

First, then, there must be an idea or a story to tell. This message must be told in a simple, clear-cut way. The picture and the printed message should say the same thing.

The best advice that can be given with regard to the designing of the poster is that the simpler the poster the more effective it is. Never tell more than one story in each poster. The only lettering on the poster should be that contained in the legend, and this should be as brief as possible.

Objects and lettering should be drawn with the idea of being seen at a distance. Small details should be avoided. In the well-planned poster a proper amount of well-placed space must be left for the lettering. Generally speaking the best poster is the one in which both the picture and the lettering seem necessary to the poster; that is, neither outweighs the other.

Color in posters, relatively speaking, is not nearly so important as design, but it is very effective when properly used. Remember that it is not the number of colors used but rather their selection and placing that counts.

A New Camera

Recently there has appeared on the market a small, new-type camera, which may prove highly useful in portraying 4-H club activities. The unique feature of this camera is that it uses a short strip of motion-picture film, which permits the taking of 50 pictures with one loading. The camera retails at $20 and the film at 50 cents. The lens in this camera is about six times as fast as the lens on an ordinary camera. Because of its quality and speed the lens permits the taking of satisfactory pictures under light conditions which produce failures when an ordinary camera is used. The pictures are only $\frac{3}{4}$ inch by 1 inch, so that if prints are wanted, they really need to be enlarged. They are usually enlarged to $3\frac{1}{4}$ by $4\frac{1}{2}$, and the charge for this is about 10 cents a picture. Fortunately it is not necessary to do much of this.

Such a camera probably will prove most useful in giving illustrated talks. On long trips or automobile tours, or to show steps in the process of performing some operation, one may take a series of pictures on one of these

strips of film. It costs from 10 to 25 cents to have each strip of negative developed and about 4 cents a picture to have them printed on another piece of film for use in a lantern. The cost of having pictures put into that form, then, is not greater than having made an equal number of prints size $2\frac{1}{4}$ by $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

Electricity in some form is, of course, necessary for their projection. Counties having a good lantern-slide projector can usually purchase for about $37 an attachment that can be used for showing these film strips. Special lanterns for showing such films cost about $50 to $60. Attention should be called to the fact that the Department of Agriculture is now making up many of its numerous sets of lantern slides on these films and that all material of that kind can be borrowed for club use without any charge except for postage. Our aim is to make nearly all of our sets of lantern slides available in two forms -- film strip and glass slides. Use whichever will be more convenient and less expensive.

Projection Lanterns and Their Use

To persons who are going to use a lantern a few suggestions on the operation may be helpful. It is very simple to operate.

(1) Make sure not to attach the lantern to a current that is too heavy for the lamp in the lantern.

(2) If the room can not be darkened, then place the screen in the darkest part of the room and shade it if necessary. Remember that a small, bright picture is more satisfactory than a large, weak one.

(3) Put a slide into the lantern and roughly focus it, pulling out the bellows if the screen is close and pushing it together for a longer distance. This done, remove the slide and examine the lit-up area on the screen or wall. If the whole area is clear of color and equally bright all over, then the lantern is in perfect adjustment and ready for use.

Often, however, this is not the case. In driving over a rough road it is rather easy to shake the lantern out of adjustment. When the lamp is too far back there will be a margin of red. If the lamp is too far forward there will be a blue margin and sometimes a blue circle in the center. Therefore move the lamp back and forth until both colored margins disappear. If the lamp is moved too far to the right that side of the screen becomes dark, or if too far to the left, the left side becomes too dark. In similar manner, when the lamp is too high the top of the screen becomes dark, and just the opposite when the lamp is placed too low. Thus we see that adjusting a lantern is a simple thing. Adjust the lamp in three different directions, forward and back, left and right, and up and down, until the screen is clearly and evenly illuminated. Care should be taken to keep the lenses clean. Keep hands off the lenses. If any of the lenses must be removed for cleaning remove only one piece at a time, first making sure that you know just how to put it back properly.

Sources of Illustrative Material

But how are the desired lantern slides, motion pictures, and the like, to be procured for one's own use? The Department of Agriculture, the State college, and the county extension office will often be able to supply your needs, but it should never be forgotten that the most valuable illustrations that you can use are those taken in your own community and county. Therefore if you wish to use illustrations learn to take your own pictures. The expense of doing this can be kept down to a moderate amount if one uses a rather small camera and takes only worth-while subjects and follows instructions carefully. Here are a few helpful suggestions:

How to Learn to Take Pictures

Become thoroughly acquainted with every part of your camera and how to use it. If you can get the assistance of some one who is successful with a camera, avail yourself of this help. If not so fortunate, make a thorough study of your instruction book and faithfully carry out its directions. Do not load the camera until you are familiar with every working part. Always load or unload in weak light but never in bright sunshine.

Learn to study the subjects. Study good pictures at every chance. Note how the great artists arrange their groups and tell their stories.

Every picture should tell some worth-while story. Do not waste time, money, and effort snapping scenes which have no practical value. Put more time and thought into your picture making before making the exposure. The results will be more satisfactory. Usually it is best not to line up groups facing the camera.

How to Take Good Club Pictures

Always aim to make pictures look natural. It is not natural and it is not sensible to put a group of club girls out into brilliant sunshine to use a sewing machine. The picture will also be ridiculous. It is not necessary to have the subject out in bright sunshine to get a good picture. In fact many of the best photographs of club activities are taken in the shade of a house, on a porch, or in the house. In all such cases the ordinary camera will have to be firmly fixed upon a tripod, table, box, or other steady support and a time exposure given. Consult the instruction book on how to make time exposures and what exposure to give. Those wishing to take many pictures for serious purposes should purchase a reliable meter, which is a great help in determining how long an exposure to give each subject.

After you have determined that a certain group or scene is really worth photographing, then the next problem is to decide where to place the camera. This is extremely important. It is a good plan when possible to walk around the object and carefully select the position from which the subject shows best what one wants to tell. That is the place to put the camera. Put in plenty of time doing this, and the pictures will improve.

As a general rule, the sun should be back of and more or less to one side of the camera. If the sun is directly behind the camera the chances are that the pictures will be flat, lifeless, and lacking in interest. Remember it takes both sunshine and shadow, or whites and blacks to make a picture.

Attention should be called to the fact, however, that longer exposures are necessary when the sun is at the side of the camera than when it is directly behind it.

It has previously been stated that pictures must be sharp and clear. Fuzzy pictures can not be used. To make pictures sharp three things are necessary. One is that the camera must be set correctly for the distance; second, the camera must be perfectly steady during the exposure; and third, the opening in the lens must not be large.

At least 75 per cent of the films snapped by the beginner are underexposed, that is, not enough light was allowed to pass through the lens to make the necessary impression on the film. This is one of the most serious mistakes that can be made in taking photographs. To overcome underexposure two things are necessary. One is to learn to recognize underexposure and correct exposure and the other is to learn how to give the correct exposure. In underexposure the picture is too dark. There is not enough detail in the shadows. Get some one to look over your negatives and prints and show you how to recognize underexposure. Make careful records of exposures and study the results. When in doubt always give more rather than less exposure. Correct exposure brings out the detail clearly. If you take enough pictures to warrant the expense of about $2, get an exposure meter, which will help you in determining the proper exposure to give.

Lastly, put as much action into your pictures as possible, to make them interesting. In taking pictures of moving objects avoid getting too close and taking the subject directly from the side. It is not only easier to get it from an angle, but the results are usually more pleasing.

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